

## URBAN DESIGN PANEL MINUTES

**DATE:** June 20, 2012

**TIME:** N/A

**PLACE:** N/A

**PRESENT:** MEMBERS OF THE URBAN DESIGN PANEL:  
Robert Barnes  
Helen Besharat (Chair)  
Daryl Condon  
Vincent Dumoulin  
David Grigg  
Bruce Hemstock  
Arno Matis  
Norm Shearing  
Peter Wreglesworth

**REGRETS:**  
Gregory Borowski  
Alan Endall  
Veronica Gillies  
Geoff McDonell

**RECORDING  
SECRETARY:** Lorna Harvey

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ITEMS REVIEWED AT THIS MEETING	
1.	633 Main Street
2.	2261 West 41st Avenue

**BUSINESS MEETING**

Chair Besharat called the meeting to order at 4:12 p.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There being no New Business the meeting considered applications as scheduled for presentation.

1. **Address:** 633 Main Street  
**DE:** Rezoning  
**Use:** 16-storey mixed-use commercial and residential building with ground level commercial units and 151 residential units on level 2-16.  
**Zoning:** RS-1 to CD-1  
**Application Status:** Rezoning  
**Review:** First  
**Architect:** Chris Dikeakos Architecture  
**Owner:** Blue Sky Properties  
 Richard Bernstein, Chris Dikeakos Architecture  
 Amber Paul, Durante Kruek Landscape Architects  
**Delegation:** Eesmyal Santos-Brault, Recollective  
 Dale Bosa, Blue Sky Properties  
 Mark Kopinya, Blue Sky Properties  
**Staff:** Dwayne Drobot and Paul Cheng

**EVALUATION: SUPPORT (8-0)****Introduction:**

Dwayne Drobot, Rezoning Planner, introduced the proposal by giving a bit of a history of the site. The site is located at the corner of Main and East Georgia Streets. There is a 2-storey development currently on the site with retail and office uses. The proposal is for a mixed-use redevelopment of 16-storeys with retail on the main floor and residential above. The applicable policy for this site includes the Rezoning Policy for Chinatown South which was part of the Historic Height Review which was approved by Council in April 2011. The site can be redeveloped up to 90 feet under the current HA-1A zoning but with a rezoning, the height could be increased up to 150 feet. Mr. Drobot noted that East Georgia Street is not a fully open street. It is the City's intention to work with BC Hydro who owns the substation to the south in order to do a land swap. The City would have title to East Georgia Street and BC Hydro would have title to the lane. The goal is to reopen East Georgia Street in this location and reconnect up from Main Street to Andy Livingstone Park. Right now it is a surface parking lot and there is a five to seven foot drop and a retaining wall. Separate and independent of this proposal the City will work with BC Hydro so that the City can acquire the land and then be able to open the street to the south. This proposal has incorporated that into their design.

Paul Cheng, Development Planner, further described the proposal noting that it is a rezoning and will come back to the Panel at the development permit stage. Mr. Cheng gave an overall context for Chinatown. When the rezoning policy was implemented and went to Council for adoption there was always a feeling that extra height and density needed to be reconciled in an historical context that traditionally is only about 70 feet in height. At the same time, staff wanted to see extra height because it brought in the kind of development that the area needs. There is another rezoning application in the area with a similar height. Mr. Cheng said that 90 feet is the maximum height for the HA-1A zoning, but within those 90 feet the 70 foot streetwall datum line should be strongly expressed. With rezonings, however, in the HA-1A zoning, 90 feet is the new 70 feet. The idea is that because most of the rezonings will be along Main Street which is oriented north-south and is 991 feet wide, a 90 foot expression is appropriate to Main Street. He added that the datum line should be between 70 and 90 feet

and anything above that should be visually subordinate to the streetwall building line. He said they are trying to continue the sawtooth pattern that is seen in traditional Chinatown where buildings side by side are usually different heights.

Advice from the Panel on this application is sought on the following:

1. Does the proposal visually integrate successfully with the historical context of Chinatown?
2. Does the proposal successfully emulate the rich pedestrian experience of the historical context?
3. With respect to the architectural treatment and the proposed setbacks of the upper massing, does the proposal successfully fulfil the intent of the guidelines, which is the visual reconciliation of 150 feet building heights in a lower historical context?
4. Does the proposal succeed with the activation of the service lane while also addressing the utilitarian functions of the lane such as garbage, parking entrances, etc?

Mr. Drobot and Mr. Cheng took questions from the Panel.

**Applicant's Introductory Comments:**

Richard Bernstein, Architect, further described the project. He noted that the Panel looked at a proposal about six months ago for Main and Keefer Streets and supported it. Mr. Bernstein said that the relationship drove the separation of the two buildings as well as the courtyard expression. He described the architecture noting that they didn't want to mimic the historical expression of existing buildings. They wanted a contemporary expression that was sensitive to the context. He added that a lot of Chinatown expression is about signage that provides a lot of visual vitality which is something they want to show on the building. They are also using balconies and cornice lines to make a connection to the context. As well the East Georgia Street extension is an important manoeuvre in that it will become an important connection down to Andy Livingstone Park to the Carrall Street Greenway. Mr. Bernstein said they want to create a corner plaza that will attract restaurants and animate the street life. They also saw an opportunity to create public art in the plaza as well as on the face of the building. They are thinking of either inviting an artist or having a design competition for the art. Mr. Bernstein described the architecture noting that they have varied the brick colour, changed the window details and balcony details, and varied the cornice line on the 70 foot line which occurs on the southeast module and then steps up to 90 feet on the northeast module. The retail has been carried down East Georgia Street as well as residential entry is located on that side of the building.

Eesmyal Santos-Brault described the sustainability strategy noting the envelope and windows lends itself well for energy performance. They will be using a hydronic system so they will make all the EcoCity Rezoning requirements. There is also a water efficient system for irrigation and drought tolerant plants. They will be targeting 40% water savings indoors and 50% outdoor.

Amber Paul, Landscape Architect, remarked that the streetscape is the typical Chinatown standards. There is an existing tree on the corner of Main and East Georgia Streets that will be preserved and a new row of trees along East Georgia Street will be added. The building is being stepped back on the corner to allow for a plaza that has great sun exposure and is being designed with long benches. The design of the walls and benches will be an offset pattern according to Feng Shui principles. There is an amenity terrace on the second floor with some private patios and there will be some landscape screening for privacy. The amenity garden will

be raised and a designated area for urban agriculture as well as a informal children's play area is planned. A green roof is planned for level eleven and at the top the penthouse suite terraces are open for the views to the northwest.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

**Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:**

- Design development to the retail expression including canopies;
- Consider improving the semi-private courtyard space; and
- Consider having the indoor amenity space off the courtyard;
- Consider wrapping the retail component further into the lane.

**Related Commentary:**

The Panel supported the proposal and thought it met the intent of the guidelines for the area.

The Panel supported the massing and density and thought it complied with the spirit and the intent of the zoning. Some Panel members wondered if the expression related to the context for the area and suggested a cleaner and simpler vocabulary. They noted that the tower reads as a too dominate form and thought the bottom forms should be more dominate. One Panel member noted that the cornices seemed to be blending into other elements and need further design development. A couple of Panel members liked that the tower element came to the ground.

The Panel thought the ground plan in terms of retail was well handled but thought the entries were a little understated. A couple of Panel members suggested wrapping the retail edge further down to the parking entrance ramp. Another Panel member noted that the height of the retail was supportable and would make for good retail space. As well a couple of Panel members suggested individualizing the canopies was a good idea and was in keeping with the Chinatown expression.

The Panel liked the corner plaza and the lane treatment as well as the upper amenity space. One Panel member thought the amenity space needed to be more formal and useable and should be programmed to meet the resident's need while another Panel member thought the amenity room should be facing the courtyard. One Panel member wasn't convinced that the lane plaza would be successful and wanted to see it on the corner as a way to invite pedestrians down the lane. As well the plaza could be opened up more to the street and the benches should have back as a way to express the Chinatown vocabulary.

Regarding the public art, one Panel member suggested it should more in keeping with modern Chinese art. It was suggested that the applicant could consider local and Chinese artists as a way to engage the artistic community.

**Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Bernstein thanked the Panel for their comments. He noted that they have had similar conversations regarding the some of their comments. They need to go to the next level of detail and will integrate the comments regarding public art. He added that they want to make it a Chinatown building without going over the top.

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2.	<b>Address:</b>	<b>2261 West 41st Avenue</b>
	<b>DE:</b>	<b>DE415738</b>
	<b>Use:</b>	To construct a 4-storey mixed-use building consisting of one storey retail (shell only), 1 storey with two dwelling units and commercial/residential parking and floors 3-4 with 10 dwelling units (5 per storey)
	<b>Zoning:</b>	<b>C-2</b>
	<b>Application Status:</b>	<b>Complete</b>
	<b>Review:</b>	<b>First</b>
	<b>Architect:</b>	<b>Towes + Warner Architecture</b>
	<b>Owner:</b>	<b>Zenpex Development Ltd.</b>
	<b>Delegation:</b>	<b>Doug Warner, Towes + Warner Architecture Sig Toews, Towes + Warner Architecture</b>
	<b>Staff:</b>	<b>Marie Linehan</b>

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## EVALUATION: NON-SUPPORT (2-6)

### Introduction:

Marie Linehan, Development Planner, introduced the proposal for a small site in the Kerrisdale neighbourhood, a couple of blocks west of the Arbutus Boulevard. Ms. Linehan described the context for the area noting that across the lane is RM-3 zoning which permits higher density tower developments up to 12-storeys. A seventeen foot dedication has been taken at the front of the site for future road widening. There is a significant grade change with a rise of about one storey from the front to the back resulting in a higher lane. The parking will come from the lane at the second storey. The proposal is for a mixed-use building with commercial at grade and three storeys of residential above providing for twelve units. Ms. Linehan noted that the proposal generally fits within the C-2 zoning parameters with some relaxations of the envelope at the rear. Ms. Linehan asked the Panel for their comments on overall design, materials and details since the applicant is seeking conditional density.

### Applicant's Introductory Comments:

Doug Warner, Architect, further described the proposal noting there is a significant setback in the front which reduces the size of the site. They initially designed it without the courtyard but it was recommended by City staff to include one. The parking area is included in the FSR calculations because there isn't any other place to locate it due to the slope of the site. The courtyard allows for the provision of an interesting amenity for the residents. They have tried to adhere to the Kerrisdale guidelines to include some of the heritage aspects with respect to materials. They have planned a distinct entrance for the residential with wood paneled doors. The front elevation is made to appear as a three storey building with a glazed canopy on the 4th floor to provide sun protection and to allow for an interesting texture to the building.

The applicant team took questions from the Panel.

### Panel's Consensus on Key Aspects Needing Improvement:

- Design development on the second and third floor façade to improve the expression;
- Consider improving the residential entry expression;
- Consider improving the courtyard to reduce privacy issues.

### Related Commentary:

The Panel did not support the proposal.

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The Panel supported the relaxations and thought they were well handled. As well they thought the West 41st Avenue façade was successful at the ground plane. Some of the Panel thought the residential entry could be improved as well as the signage treatment. One Panel member thought the wood might not be the right material for a modern expression while another Panel member suggested making the canopy expression different from the CRUs. The Panel thought the glazed canopy worked well on the fourth floor but had some concerns with the center band on the West 41st Avenue elevation. They thought there was too strong a break from the retail although they thought the bay window treatment was successful. A couple of Panel members suggested repeating the bay window element for the bedrooms. The Panel agreed that the West 41st Avenue side needed a rework of the entire façade to make it stronger in its expression.

Some of the Panel members had some concerns regarding the courtyard circulation as it runs immediately adjacent to the units and thought there might be some privacy issues. One Panel member suggested adding some visual separation. Another Panel member suggested that the tree element needed to be a light texture so it doesn't create more density in the courtyard while another Panel member thought the space should be completely planted to make for a nice visual space.

The Panel supported the lane treatment and thought the planting was a positive solution. However, a couple of Panel members thought the planters could be reshaped.

One Panel member suggested covering the PMT on the lane as a way to provide more deck space to the unit above it.

**Applicant's Response:**

Mr. Warner agreed that the envelope is really tight but they tried to work within the guidelines. He said he was thankful for the Panel's comments regarding the West 41st Avenue expression. He added that the ground floor retail needs to have a maximum amount of glass but that they could redefine the residential entry and lobby area.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.